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FOUR PROPOSITIONS

SUSTAINED AGAINST THE CLAIMS

OF THE

American Home Missionary Society.

BY REV. J. L. WILSON, D. D.

Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

He that doeth truth cometh to the light.—John iii. 21.

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FOUR PROPOSITIONS, &c.

THE Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America, under the care of the General Assembly, has been, for several years, much disquieted by the claims and importunities of a voluntary association called "The American Home Missionary Society."

This Association has no visible connexion with any branch of the Church of Jesus Christ, being amenable to no ecclesiastical Body. Had this society attended to its own affairs, and left the concerns of others uninterrupted, like many other associations of similar organization, she might have enjoyed the patronage of the friends of Zion, until an auxiliary connection with some wholesome branch, might have secured the enjoyment of a productive union with the TRUE VINE. But when, without affording any security for orthodoxy or piety, in her members or officers, she claims the patronage of the Presbyterian Church, interferes with her plans, distracts her counsels, divides her members, draws off her resources and weakens her strength, by enticing Churches, Presbyteries, and Synods, from their constitutional obligations and plighted faith; it becomes as clear as the mid-day sun, that if there be any thing in the doctrines, discipline, and Missionary operations of the Presbyterian Church worth preserving, the claims and importunities of the A. H. M. Society must be firmly and boldly resisted. Standing in my own place, under a deep sense of duty, I shall attempt, in opposition to the pretensions of this Society, to sustain the following propositions:—

I. The Lord Jesus Christ has committed the management of Christian Missions to his Church.

II. The Presbyterian Church, being one great family of the Church of Jesus Christ, is, by her form of government, organized into a Christian Missionary Society.

III. The American Home Missionary Society is not an ecclesiastical, but a civil Institution.

IV. By interference and importunity she disturbs the peace and injures the prosperity of the Presbyterian Church.

The support of these propositions will, I trust, secure attention to a few remarks, with which I shall close this essay.

1st. The management of Christian Missions is committed by the Lord Jesus Christ to his Church.

That our Saviour has erected in this world a visible kingdom, called THE CHURCH OF GOD, which consists of all, in every na-

tion, who profess and practice his holy religion ; and that this extended society, by the will of God, is divided into many particular Churches, are truths, which no intelligent Christian can dispute.

That the Presbyterian Church, under the care of the General Assembly, forms one great family of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, on earth, and that her system of doctrine, form of worship and ecclesiastical government are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, no sound Presbyterian will deny.

As the kingdom of Christ is not of *this world*, so none of the great or small families of which the kingdom is composed can be of this world. Every one has professedly come out from the world and associated together for godly living, not according to the principles of worldly policy, but agreeably to some ecclesiastical form of government. To whom has Christ committed his truth ? With whom has he left his ordinances ? For what society did he give Apostles and Prophets ; Evangelists and Pastors ; Teachers, helps and governments ? Only one answer can be given to these questions. THE CHURCH.

After establishing his kingdom, and taking his station on his holy hill of Zion, there to reign, "till the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the most high God," to whom did he commit the work and warfare which were to subvert the empire of darkness ? To the world, or to the Church ? Were there any on earth who loved his cause, who honoured his name, and were willing to labour for the destruction of Satan's kingdom, but his own people ? Are they not the salt of the earth—the light of the world ? And in speaking of the conversion of men, does not the Apostle ask, "How can they hear without a preacher, and how can they preach except they be sent ?" Now, admitting and thankfully owning the supreme influence of the Lord of the harvest in sending labourers, yet I must ask by what society are they to be sent ? By the Church, or by the world ? To whom did Christ say, "Go ye—disciple all nations" ? He said this to the Church, not to the world. And thus his people can say, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." But to argue a subject so plain is like burning a taper to assist the light of a sunbeam. Can any intelligent Christian deny that Christian Missions ought to be conducted by the Christian Church ? Not one. I therefore proceed to show,

2d. That the Presbyterian Church is, by her form of government, organized into a Christian Missionary Society.

The Presbyterian Church never assumed to be the "Church universal." She only claims a place as one family in the visible kingdom of Jesus Christ, and claiming this place, holds out the hand of fellowship to other families of the same kingdom. All real Presbyterians are unanimously of opinion—that God alone is

Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men—they consider the rights of private judgment in matters of religion as universal and unalienable—they declare explicitly the terms of admission to their communion—the qualifications of their ministers and elders, and the whole system of their internal government. If in any of these things they err, they do not thereby infringe the rights of others, but only make a bad use of their own liberty. No one is compelled to become a Presbyterian; but when he voluntarily unites with this Church, he, undoubtedly, professes a preference for her creed, and submission to her discipline. Presbyterians endeavour to occupy a middle, and, as they think, scriptural ground, between ecclesiastical domination and church democracy. The government is in the people. The people rule by representatives of their own choice. No Elder can rule in a church unless he be chosen by the people. No Minister can be settled over a church without being elected by the people. The radical principle of Presbyterian church government is, that a majority shall govern. Yet, as all cannot meet in one place to deliberate and vote, the government is administered by representatives. In every representative government there is a voluntary transfer of power; and when any power is by compact surrendered, it is of course no longer retained. Nor can a surrendered power be again lawfully resumed without the consent of those to whom it is transferred. Thus the General Assembly is the highest judicatory in the Presbyterian Church. This body is composed, according to the form of government, of an equal proportion of Ministers and Ruling Elders, commissioned by the Presbyteries according to a specified ratio or rule of proportion. Among other things, it is declared that the General Assembly is to be considered the collected wisdom and united voice of the whole Church—that this body shall constitute the BOND OF UNION among all the churches—and to this body is delegated the power of sending Missions to ANY PART, to plant churches, or supply vacancies. A Presbytery, unable to supply the vacancies in its own bounds, can ask help of another Presbytery, or of a Synod, or of the General Assembly—but by compact, the General Assembly *alone* have the power to send Missions to ANY PART, to plant churches, or supply vacancies. To say that this power is delegated by the whole Church, and then to say that the several churches are not pledged to sustain the Assembly in the due exercise of it, is to utter an absurdity at the hazard of reputation.

An attempt has been made to call in question, or rather explain away this part of our form of government. And no wonder, for it stands in the way of the A. H. M. Society, and is an insuperable barrier to Presbyterians who are desirous of becoming her auxiliaries, and yet see and feel their obligations to aid, in preference, the General Assembly's Board of Missions.

When, however, the import of a clause in any form of government is rendered dubious by the skill of artful disputants, the true meaning can be known by a reference to the uniform practice of those, who at first framed the article, and then acted upon it. At the first meeting of the General Assembly, two Synods asked, and obtained leave, to conduct Missionary operations in their own bounds, which was granted with this restriction—They were not to interfere with the Assembly's Missions. In process of time two other Synods obtained from the Assembly a similar license, with the condition that they should make, to them, their annual reports. Afterwards, at least three of these Synods resigned to the Assembly the business of conducting Missions, and the other passed an order for her Presbyteries to organize the churches on the plan of the Assembly's Board of Missions. There was one case, in which a Presbytery requested permission to conduct Missions. This request was not granted, and they were referred to the Assembly's plan of organization. The uniform understanding and practice of the Church for forty years, has settled beyond controversy, the meaning of that clause of the constitution now under consideration. But it has been recently discovered, that the General Assembly has no existence except for two or three weeks in each year, while the members are holding their sessions! And as existence is lost, there can be no power of conducting Missions! This indeed is a wonderful discovery!!

The Commissioners exist, their Committees exist, the Clerks exist, the Board of Missions exists, the Trustees of the Assembly, an incorporated body, with all the officers needed for the transaction of business—and all the power necessary for receiving, holding, and managing the permanent and contingent funds of Assembly, for Missionary, theological, and other purposes, can exist, and that too with perpetual succession; and over all these a Moderator exists, who has constitutional power, on any extraordinary emergency, by his circular, to convene the Judicatory; and holds his office till another Moderator is chosen, and then after reading the rules of the Assembly to his successor, says, "I resign my place and office;" and yet, strange, passing strange, the Assembly does not exist!!! A stated and a permanent Clerk, Standing Committees, a Board of Missions, an incorporated Board of Trustees, into whose hands funds can be placed, by donation, bequest, or otherwise, any day in the year, for the use of the General Assembly, all acting for a non-entity!! Holding the claim of this non-entity, till his successor is duly elected, and then formally resigning his place and office!!! But be it remembered, that such a farce as this was never exhibited by sound Presbyterianism. The theatre on which this novel exhibition has been made, is the wandering fancy of the Corresponding Secretary of the A. H. M. Society. To talk of the General Assembly, being "the collected wisdom and united voice of the whole Church"—to call this body

of Commissioners, "the bond of union among all our churches"—to say in the Form of Government that the General Assembly has power "to decide controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; to bear testimony against error—to superintend the concerns of the whole Church—to correspond with foreign Churches—suppress schisms—and conduct Missions IN ANY PART—to plant churches, and supply vacancies—and yet to deny the existence of this body, for at least forty-nine weeks in every year, is a vagary truly worthy the talents and skill of the man who stands foremost in the ranks of INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIANISM.

If, however, it be not true, that the Presbyterian Church is, by her form of government a Missionary Society, then it follows that she is not a Christian Church, and no one is safe in her communion. I have shown that Christ has committed the management of Christian Missions to his Church, and not to the world. Any Society that assumes the Christian name, and yet has no organization for conducting Christian Missions, gives her profession the lie. Prove to me that the Presbyterian Church is not a Christian Missionary Society, and unless a reform can soon be effected, I shall leave her communion.

I have, sometimes, hesitated, when approaching this subject. I have urged myself to think favourably of men who oppose my views. I have wronged my own feelings for the sake of peace. I have been fearful of giving an unhallowed touch to the ark of God. But when I see in the clear light of heaven, that Jesus Christ has committed the cause of Christian Missions to his Church, and to no other Society, I know I am in the path of duty, when, with all my powers I oppose any association of men that assumes the right of conducting Missions merely upon the platform of a civil constitution. And here I shall attempt to show,

3d. That the American Home Missionary Society is not an *ecclesiastical*, but a *civil* Institution.

Ecclesiastical means belonging to the Church—*civil* signifies belonging to any person in the commonwealth or body politic.

This proposition is fully proven by the facts disclosed by the Constitution of the Society. Any person with one cent can purchase membership. With thirty dollars, can purchase membership for life. The payment of one hundred dollars constitutes any one a director for life. The members, all of whom may be worldly men, elect the officers and managers. The Constitution affords no security that any one of the officers or any member of the Executive Committee shall belong to any church.

This may be an American Association, but it certainly, so far as its Constitution goes, is very unlike that Society to which the Lord Jesus Christ has committed the management of Christian Missions.

The Corresponding Secretary of this American Home has published that she consists of twenty thousand members. These are

scattered over vast regions of country, and supposing them all pious, they cannot attend the annual meetings in New-York, and give their votes at the elections. Suppose then, that as many of the twenty thousand Infidels, who are said to reside in that city, as might be sufficient to control an election, should purchase membership for that purpose—is there any thing to prevent them from making a Board of their own stamp, and taking the control of the Society into their own hands? Do you say there is no danger? I say, if such a movement be practicable, there *is* danger. The bare possibility of such a defeat should teach the friends of the American Home that she is built upon the sand. Will you reply, that infidels can join the Church in order to effect its ruin? Christ has said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Can infidels with the same facility reach the Assembly's Board of Missions? To change this Board, they must not only join the Church, but become ordained ministers of the gospel, and then be appointed Commissioners to the General Assembly, in such numbers as to make a majority. How widely different is all this from the easy method of purchasing a vote at a popular election by the payment of a mere trifle.

But we are frequently reminded that the Bible, Tract, and Sabbath-School Societies are voluntary associations. Yes, these institutions are designedly and confessedly of a *civil* character. They are great benevolent societies, that may be carried on by Christians in connection with the men of the world, and as long as they are well managed, the Church of Christ may avail herself of their auxiliary operations for the spread of the gospel. But they are not essential either to the existence or character of the Church. She has existed without them. She would still exist, if they were all blotted out from under heaven. Not so with Christian Missions. From that solemn moment when Jesus said, "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," the Church has been charged with the business of sending abroad the messages of salvation for the healing of the nations. It is God's appointed method, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. The eunuch had the scriptures, but the preaching of Philip was the means of his conversion. The prayers and alms of Cornelius went up as a memorial before God, but Peter must go and tell him words by which he and his house might be saved. Lydia worshipped God, but her heart was opened under the preaching of Paul. How can men "believe on him of whom they have not heard?" "And how can they hear without a preacher?" "And how can they preach except they be sent?" Are they to be sent by a *civil* society or by the church? I confidently answer by the church, or they are not sent according to the rules of Christ's kingdom, which is not of this world. The path of duty is plain, the way of error perplexing, and those who

ramble usually interfere with the peace and injure the prosperity of others. This leads me to observe,

IV. That the American Home Missionary Society, by interference and importunity, disturbs the peace and injures the prosperity of the Presbyterian Church.

On this subject I need ask but a few questions. Who disturbed the peace of the General Assembly in 1828, when an overture was presented for re-organizing the Board of Missions? Who disturbed the peace of the Cincinnati Presbytery, when, for years, the brethren had been engaged, without an instance of discord, in promoting revivals of religion? Who produced the evils and distress depicted in the following language? "The evils of the separate operations" [of the two Boards] "in this country, are increasing with the days, weeks, and months as they pass. Churches are divided—sessions are divided—and ministers are taking different sides—there is much heart-burning—many suspicions and severe censures felt and expressed against both Boards." These are extracts from a letter addressed to the committee of the Cincinnati Presbytery, by the Rev. N. H. Hall, Rev. John C. Young, and Rev. V. S. Hinkley, and dated at Lexington, Kentucky, August 22, 1830. To each of the above questions I answer without the fear of a reasonable contradiction, that the interference and importunity of the American Home Missionary Society, have produced those disturbances, divisions, heart-burnings and suspicions, under which the Church is withering and groaning.

These things have not been done in a corner. Many an eye has wept—many a heart has bled—and I have no doubt but the operations so productive of mischief, stand recorded in that book, which, in the great day, will disclose the motives of those who sow the seeds of discord and kindle the coals of strife among brethren. Disturb the peace of any society, and you injure her prosperity. But you injure her still more, if you succeed in alienating her friends, and drawing off her resources. The A. H. M. Society boasts of having drawn under her influence many churches, together with whole Presbyteries and Synods. In justification of this, it is said, that the General Assembly have left the churches to their own deliberate and unbiassed choice. And what is the deliberate and unbiassed choice of a sound Presbyterian church? To go with a society which rests upon a civil constitution, and assumes an independent attitude, or stand firm and faithful to the organization of the Presbyterian Church, and contribute to the funds of her Board of Missions?

Proofs in support of the proposition I am now sustaining, are multiplied wherever I turn my eyes. Families are divided, Churches are divided, and Ministers who once laboured together as true yoke-fellows, now shun each other's society. This American Home is to Presbyterians, what Campbellism is to the Baptists. And he who can affirm that the operations of this Society have not disturbed the peace, and injured the prosperity of the

Presbyterian Church, may as easily say that the morning was never spread upon the mountains—that the sun never shone at noon.

It is time to close with a few remarks.

I. The origin, organization and operations of the A. H. M. S. prove clearly to me, that the overthrow of Presbyterianism as it now exists, is a leading object with those who understand the whole scheme. I do not intimate that they design at present to change the name. But who cares for a mere name? The Cum-berlands have the name—the English Presbyterians have the name, but they are alike destitute of the orthodoxy and order of real Presbyterians. Take away the form of sound words, and destroy the missionary character of the Presbyterian Church, and she is not worth a rush. A combination of facts have constrained me to express my opinions frankly and freely on this subject; but I desire it may be distinctly understood, that I impute no improper motives to any man who really holds and teaches the doctrines and loves the order of the Presbyterian Church, and yet may have, for a time, become connected with the American Home. But with the feelings and heart of a brother, and to some of them a father, I beg them to pause, I beseech them to consider, I pray them to open their eyes upon facts, if they cannot yield to opinions. The A. H. M. Society was planned in the city of Boston by our Congregational brethren—at their request the United Domestic Missionary Society in the city of New-York, adopted this constitution and became the American Home. I believe all the domestic missionary societies in New-England, became merged in, or auxiliary to this independent institution. This was perfectly natural, and if they had gone on and let the Presbyterian Churches remain in an undisturbed connection with their own Board of Missions, I should have had no right to complain. But from the day of her birth to the present hour, her agents have been insidiously and assiduously working upon the Ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church. They have visited the land in its length and breadth, to weaken the hands of the General Assembly's Board, and obtain for the American Home the patronage of all the Churches. Their success has been wonderful. They have drawn off whole Presbyteries and Synods, and divided and distracted the rest. So far as my name and influence could operate, they have had the art, for a time, to use them both to promote their plans, particularly in the West.

When their project of union failed, which they knew could not succeed without the ruin of the Presbyterian Church, a plan of an Independent Society on this side the mountains was proposed. In connection with these things, what have been the sentiments expressed by Home-missionary men? "That the General Assembly can manage no missions except for two or three weeks in the year:"—"that it is dangerous for the Church to have any thing to do with money matters:"—"that the Board of Missions passes

over the heads of Presbyteries and Synods, and professes responsibility to the General Assembly only, while the Home Board is the servant of all:"—"that the General Assembly makes bad appointments:"—"that there is an aristocracy in the General Assembly that must come down:" that the Corresponding Secretary of the Assembly's Board, is a bad man," &c. &c. To prove this last charge we have seen about twelve columns of a newspaper closely occupied. It has been published by the Corresponding Secretary of the Central Committee of Agency, located in Cincinnati, that many of the patrons of the A. H. M. S. "could not be induced to contribute to a Board connected with an ecclesiastical body, as the Board of Missions is with the General Assembly." Why not? Plainly, they are Independents. The Congregational Churches have no standard of doctrines. Every man preaches what he pleases, from Antinomianism to Universalism. Hence, we are not surprised to hear warm advocates for the American Home advance such sentiments as these. "Sin must have had a holy origin—God, as the first cause of all things, must have been its author."

"Disinterested benevolence leads Christians to be willing to be forever miserable for the glory of God."

"Neither a holy nor a depraved nature is possible without understanding, conscience, or choice—they go astray as soon as they are born—that is, in early life."

"Substitution is unjust, and imputation unscriptural." "Jesus Christ died as much for one man as another."

But we are both surprised and grieved when we hear these preachers call themselves Presbyterians. Is this consistent with Christian candour? Have these men yet to learn that such are not the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church?

I have often been asked "can it be possible that men will profess to be Presbyterians, and yet aim to subvert her faith?" I have always answered, yes. I could mention many painful instances, but I must spare myself and the reader the anguish of such a recital. I will, however, here subjoin some extracts from the letter of a respectable clergyman in Indiana, to the Corresponding Committee of the Cincinnati Presbytery:

"In my neighbourhood, those who reject the atonement and penal sufferings of Christ, oppose the Assembly's Board and support the A. H. M. Society. In some instances, they have endeavoured to carry away our congregations to Independency. The Church where I now live is a case in point. Can those Presbyterians be awake who are aiding this work of schism? A voluntary association, amenable to nobody, and yet supported by Presbyterians in preference to their own Board of Missions! Is it uncharitable to say that they are not within consitutional grounds? If the American Home be a Presbyterian institution, let them lay down their *independent form*, and become auxiliary to the Assembly's Board."

That there are many excellent men—sound Presbyterians, now under the influence of the A. H. M. S. I doubt not—but that they will long continue her patrons, without a radical change in her organization, I cannot believe. These men may honestly ask, “where is the danger, if Home Missionaries consent to be ruled by our Presbyteries?” There, my brethren, lies the *very* danger. They quietly consent to be under the control of the Presbyteries till they can rule the Presbyteries! One example of this kind I have already witnessed. I have heard of others. Let the same thing take place throughout our land, and where is the Presbyterian Church. What will become of her doctrines—her orthodox schools—her discipline—her testimony against the heresies of those men who care not whether the sentiments they advance fall above or below, within or without the Confession of Faith? Yes, brethren, there lies the danger. Home-missionary men consent to be ruled only till they can govern. AND THEN EVERY JUDICATORY, EVERY INSTITUTION, AND ALL THE FUNDS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WILL BE COMPLETELY AND ENTIRELY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE A. H. M. SOCIETY. And if her career be not arrested by the ruthless hand of Infidelity, which, at every annual meeting, might grasp the whole society; as likely as not, the next set of professors in the Princeton Theological Seminary, would be such men as Doctors Taylor, Fitch, Murdock, and Emmons. From the possibility of such a calamity, may God of his infinite mercy preserve the Presbyterian Church.

II. Those who resist with firmness the claims of the American Home are called unkind, yea, uncharitable. Charity! what is charity! No word seems less understood—none more grossly misapplied. With errorists and schismatics, of every name, it is a current term. With them, it means, alms-giving, Christian forbearance, a good opinion of bad men, thinking one man’s belief as good as another! But what does it mean in the Bible? LOVE. Charity manifests itself in strong and well-directed parental affection. “He that spareth the rod *hateth* his son, but he that *loveth* (hath charity for) him, chasteneth him betimes.” Charity manifests itself in neighbourly kindness: “Thou shalt not *hate* thy neighbour in thy heart, but thou shalt in any wise rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him.” Charity is manifested by God’s correction. “As many as I *love*, I rebuke and chasten.” The bright and pure flame of charity glowed in the bosom of Paul when he withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed. Charity is found where there is respectful and affectionate submission to censure. “Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness.” I hope the Bible meaning of charity will be accepted, at least so far as to lesson the cry of uncharitableness against those who, from a principle of love to God and love to man, feel themselves bound to oppose the progress of error. I

plead for this, only where lawful means are used, and a Christian spirit manifested. There may be great zeal where there is no charity. This is often manifested by intermeddling with the affairs of others, so as to produce "debates, wrath, strife, heresies." But when a deep sense of the evil of departing from the faith, and the danger of corrupt doctrine infecting the whole lump, induces any to stand up for what they believe to be truth and order, to oppose the introduction of erroneous teachers, or to expel those who have crept in unawares, call them unreasonable if you please, and point out their mistakes if you can, but do not abuse and vilify them as uncharitable.

III. Those who will not go with the A. H. M. S. are already pointed at as enemies to revivals of religion.

This is characteristic of innovation. It stands recorded in a very popular work, that they who opposed the errors and disorders of the Cumberland Presbyterians, were enemies to revivals of religion. And no doubt it remains in the traditions of the New Lights of the West, that those who pronounced on them the sentence of suspension, as well as those who wrote and preached against their errors and extravagancies, were enemies to revivals of religion. And now, that perhaps, it may answer the purposes of the A. H. M. S. they point at those who stand in the way of her operations, as "enemies to revivals of religion." This may ensnare the ignorant, and start the wavering into a course of wandering, but it can never move the intelligent Christian from the path of duty.

IV. If the subject was not too serious, I should be not a little amused with the dexterity of the Home Missionary-men, in their attempts to throw all the blame of what they call the "evils of separate action," on the General Assembly's Board. As if, for example, I have a plan of domestic economy with which I am much pleased, but A, B and C, without my knowledge or consent, voluntarily agree to interfere with it—they draw up articles of association—profess to have the same object in view—artfully draw off some of my children—get possession of my funds—interfere with all my arrangements—propose a union which they know from principle I am bound to reject, and then turn round and say, "you are the cause of all this disturbance. We do most sincerely regret that an effort for union has failed. As the matter now stands, we have no alternative but to abandon our object, or to pursue it amidst the evils of separate action. We must go forward, still hoping you will see the importance of united effort."

This, no doubt, is thought to be a successful method of casting the blame and odium of existing evils, on those whose peace and prosperity they have so much injured. But what must be the reflections and feelings of men, in a dying hour, who can thus increase the anguish of a Christian Church, bleeding already at every pore, from wounds inflicted by their own hands? The in-

consistencies, also, to which Home Missionary-men are driven, would be amusing, if they were not so dreadfully distressing. "The evils of separate action" were urged by them, as a strong and almost irresistible plea for union, at least in the West. By the pastors of the Presbyterian churches in Lexington, Kentucky, calling themselves, officially, the Moderators of their respective sessions—and by the Rev. Editor of the Western Luminary, it was certified to the Committee of the Cincinnati Presbytery, that among "the evils of separate action" were, *divisions of churches, divisions of sessions, disaffection among ministers, talk of dividing the Presbyterian Church, much heart-burning, many suspicions, and severe censures felt and expressed against both Boards.* Yet, when it was demonstrated, that *these* and *other evils* were produced by the interference of the A. H. M. S. with the affairs of the Presbyterian Church, the pastor of the First Church in Lexington was induced to write and request the publication of a letter in which he denies the existence of those evils *there*, and affirms that the division of the session is without hostile feelings—that some prefer one society and some another, but there is no war—and that the spirit of union in the *very organization* of the A. H. M. S. is just suited to the approaching glorious state of the Church—the introduction of the millenium,—thus contradicting himself, denying the truth of what his reverend brethren had certified with him in a joint letter, and overturning the strong argument which he had previously urged in favour of a union of the two Boards. I have no language to express my grief. Nor would I stand in the condition of those who have brought into the Presbyterian Church these distresses, for "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." In the presence of God, I feel that I have no interest in error. I see the path of duty to be plain, that of error to be perplexing. If the Presbyterian Church stand in the way of the conversion of the world—if she be one of those evils that must be swept away, in cleansing the sanctuary—if her doctrines must be blotted out to introduce the millenium—then I shall consider that man my best friend who shall convince me of these things, and permit me to assist in overturning an injurious system; but until I am fairly and fully convinced, I cannot bear the thought of seeing her doctrines swept away by the hands of stratagem, and her missionary character swallowed up by a heterogeneous institution founded upon a civil constitution. May the Lord afford the friends of Zion wisdom, grace and strength, to resist with meekness and firmness the claims and influence of this uneclesiastical association.

V. I greatly rejoice that the Presbyterian Church has neither been last nor least in promoting the benevolent operations of the present day. I rejoice that she has not meddled with the affairs of others. When she has opposed vice, or borne testimony against dangerous errors, she has been frank, open, fearless.

Her true sons never assumed the name or professed the faith of another denomination, in order to propagate their own tenets. No worthy institution has ever asked in vain for Presbyterian patronage. I greatly rejoice that by her form of government she is a Missionary Society—that the General Assembly has power to send Missionaries to “*any place*,” known to be destitute of the means of grace. But I mourn, yes, my “inmost spirit mourns;” that she has given up her Foreign Missions into the hands of others. Our Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, Congregational and Moravian friends, are all engaged in conducting Foreign Missions.—This is highly commendable, and I wish them great success in evangelizing the world. But what are Presbyterians doing? They are attending the monthly concert of prayer, and giving thousands of dollars annually, for the support of Foreign Missions; and yet, alas! have not one Missionary station, I believe, in heathen lands! If God were to judge societies in a coming world as individuals, the Presbyterian Church, on this subject, would be speechless. But having given up the Foreign Missions in 1826, let her never, no never, yield her domestic Missions into other hands, but double her diligence in conveying the means of salvation through the length and breadth of the whole land. Would to God that the Presbyterian Church, with her 170,000 communicants, would rise as with the heart of one man, and send her form of sound words and wholesome discipline to every kindred, tribe and tongue, under the whole heaven.

VI. If, after all the evils, produced in the Presbyterian Church, by the American Home Missionary Society, her friends now plead for silence, forbearance, and brotherly kindness, let them at the next anniversary, form a constitution within ecclesiastical limits, place the Society within the pale and under the control of some branch of the Church of Christ—and then conduct their business without interrupting the peace and prosperity of others, and all will be well. We can then pray for her success, and if she need our assistance, she shall not ask it in vain. Or, if it be true, as some say, that the A. H. M. Society is a Presbyterian institution—that she has the same objects in view with the General Assembly’s Board, and that three fourths of her funds are derived from Presbyterians, let her independent character be laid aside—let her become auxiliary to the Assembly’s Board, and afford security for orthodoxy and order, and all will be well. But if her professedly Presbyterian advocates will consent to neither of these reasonable proposals, they must not complain, if true Presbyterians treat them as schismatics.

VII. I am sensible there is nothing that I can say, however true or laudable, but can be made the subject of animadversion. In addition to many other things, I expect to hear that the A. H. M. Society was planned by the greatest and best men in New-England. I would not, for the world, call in question the mo-

tives of these distinguished men, without the most satisfactory evidence. That Doctors Porter, Edwards, Taylor, Woods, and others, should honestly desire to spread New-England theology, (if any man can tell what it is.) through the whole earth, is perfectly natural and to be expected. If they made no efforts to do so, considering their views and profession, they would be chargeable with criminal negligence. But that men will profess to be Presbyterians, in order to do the same thing, is quite another matter. But I shall also hear that Doctors Alexander and Miller wrote in favour of the organization of the A. H. M. Society—that Doctor Blythe made, and Doctor Richards seconded the motion for the adoption of the constitution. Among such men as these I can say what I feel, that on many subjects I ought to take my station as a learner. But on the subject before me, I clearly see that it only requires common sense, common piety, and a common acquaintance with our common version of the Bible to believe and practice agreeably to our Confession of Faith.

That the distinguished men in New-England whose talents and motives are out of dispute at present, exerted an influence over the U. D. M. Society in New-York—that the circular of the Executive Committee of that Society, drew together a large number of the friends of Missions, and that some of the ablest and best Presbyterians in the land, without scanning the design, or foreseeing the results, became prominent in the organization of the A. H. M. Society, are facts which can all be told without impeaching the motives of any man. But that Presbyterians, after what has transpired, should still continue their patronage to that Board in preference to their own, is a matter of surprise and grief, and certainly sufficient to place any man, let his talents and apparent piety be what they may, under strong suspicion of unfaithfulness to that branch of the Church of Christ, of which he professes himself to be a member. After much deliberation, I have made this attempt, feeble and ill-judged as it may be thought by some, to restore purity, peace and order to the Presbyterian Church. I am not conscious of any unsuitable feeling towards any of my brethren. I shall cheerfully and publicly acknowledge when I see myself in error. If the doctrines and discipline of the Presbyterian church are not agreeable to the Word of God, I know they must come to nought. Believing, as I firmly do, that this Church is the soundest branch of the True Vine, on earth, my destinies must be connected with hers, unless I can see otherwise than I now do, and if I *perish*, with the faith and practice recommended in her standards—I PERISH.





